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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2017  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS OF TURKISH ATTACKS ON NORTHERN IRAQ  
UNSUBSTANTIATED

REF: A. ANKARA 812  
[1](#)B. ANKARA 686

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor Carl Siebentritt,  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(C) The Turkish press on April 11 broadly covered a Kurdish wire service report that Turkish troops shelled the northern Iraqi city of Zakho, located approximately 5 miles inside of the Iraqi border, on April 8. One newspaper, the daily Zaman, went further, claiming that Turkish commandos crossed the border into Iraq to destroy PKK terrorist camps near Zakho and points further east. According to Zaman, additional tanks and armored vehicles are en route to Cizre and Silopi in Sirnak province which borders Iraq, and where Turkish troops were reported killed in operations against the PKK over the week-end (ref a).

[1](#)2. (S) As reported ref b, and consistent with previous years, Turkish troops have begun to deploy to the southeast in anticipation of a PKK spring offensive. However, we have no information to corroborate the reported attacks on Zakho. The US military liaison officer at the Turkish Special Forces Command in Silopi (note: about 12 miles from Zakho) reports no notable change in Turkish military presence or activity and no new restrictions on his movements which might suggest Turkish military preparations for action. Adnan Elci, President of the Cizre Chamber of Commerce and a relative of the prominent Kurdish politician Serafettin Elci, dismissed the press reports as exaggeration. He characterized Turkish military activity near the border as a routine exercise and stated that no preparations are underway for a cross-border operation. We have seen no reports in other channels to suggest that the military has initiated or is preparing to initiate a cross-border action.

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